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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; September 11, 2009

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Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's No. 2 Official;  
"There Is No Talk of Succession at This Time"

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DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

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The ROK's Foreign Ministry is investigating whether North Korea  
breached international laws when it released water from its dam,  
which caused the lethal flood on the Imjin River last Sunday.  
Foreign Ministry Spokesman Moon Tae-young said yesterday that the  
ministry is closely examining the incident with other relevant  
government agencies. (All, All TVs)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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In a nationally televised speech Wednesday night before a joint session of Congress, U.S. President Barack Obama urged Congress to set aside partisan bickering and work with him to overhaul the U.S. health care system. (All, All TVs)

During a September 10 interview with Japan's Kyodo news agency, Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's number two official and President of the Supreme People's Assembly said that there is no talk of succession at this time. (Chosun, Hankook, Hankyoreh, Segye)

In a September 9 daily news briefing, State Department Spokesman Ian Kelly said, "Whatever we do has to be in very close consultation with our parties because we believe that's the best way to solve this conflict, in a Six-Party context." (Hankyoreh)

At a September 9 press conference, U.S. Defense Department Spokesman Geoff Morrell said that the U.S. is strongly requesting that Japan continue to permit its naval fuel tankers to refuel American warships near Afghanistan, reiterating that the U.S. wants to implement all agreements with Japan, including the relocation of a marine airfield on Okinawa base. (Chosun, Hankook)

## MEDIA ANALYSIS

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Korean Peninsula - developments

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All ROK media gave wide attention to the ROK's Unification Ministry's September 10 remarks that the ministry is investigating whether North Korea breached international laws when it released water from its dam, which caused the lethal flood on the Imjin River last Sunday. According to media reports, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Moon Tae-young said yesterday that the ministry is closely examining the incident with other relevant government agencies. Moderate Hankook Ilbo reported in its inside-page story that customary international law dictates that a state may not harm another state in exercising its rights. However, the newspaper noted that there is no international court that can rule definitively and authoritatively on a customary law that is not written. Hankook Ilbo reported that therefore observers believe that it will be hard to put the customary international law into actual practice and the ROKG may end up only urging North Korea to apologize for its action and obtaining a guarantee against recurrence from Pyongyang.

Major newspapers took special note of Japan's Kyodo news agency's September 10 interview with Kim Yong-nam, North Korea's number two official and president of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly. Conservative Chosun Ilbo quoted Kim as saying, "The matter of inheriting revolutionary traditions is important. But there has been no talk of succession at this time." According to the newspaper, he denied reports that Kim Jong-il has appointed his third son Jong-un as his heir apparent, which he described as an "attempt by some foreign media outlets to stifle our rise and prosperity."

Anniversary of 9/11 attacks

Moderate Seoul Shinmun carried a report on the eighth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks. In its inside-page report, the newspaper said that the lingering effect of the September 11th attacks has hampered President Obama's reform agenda. According to the daily, U.S. conservatives are criticizing President Obama's immigration reform plan, saying that easing the pathway to immigration will allow for an easy inflow of terrorists, thus threatening U.S. security. Hankook Ilbo also noted that there is a growing skepticism (in the U.S.) about the Afghanistan war that resulted from the September 11th attacks and that Obama's plan to deploy additional troops to Afghanistan has hit a snag.

Iran- nuclear

Conservative Segye Ilbo reported that Iran on September 9 presented a new package of proposals on its nuclear program to the P5+1 countries, namely the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. The package reportedly does not contain a breakthrough solution such as the halt of its uranium enrichment, according to the newspaper. The daily also quoted State Department Spokesman Ian Kelly as saying that the U.S. will review the proposal seriously.

Japan

Chosun Ilbo and Hankook Ilbo gave an inside-page play to a September 9 press conference by U.S. Defense Department Spokesman Geoff Morrell, who said that the U.S. strongly requests Japan to continue permitting its naval fuel tankers to refuel American warships near Afghanistan, reiterating that the U.S. wants to put all agreements with Japan into practice, including the relocation of a marine airfield on Okinawa base.

#### FEATURES

KIM JONG-IL 'HAS NOT APPOINTED A SUCCESSOR'  
(Chosun Ilbo, September 11, 2009, Front Page)

By Tokyo Correspondent Shin Jung-rok

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il is well and has not appointed a successor, the North's no. 2 official claimed Thursday. Kim

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Yong-nam, President of the Presidium of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, told Japan's Kyodo news agency Monday, "The matter of inheriting revolutionary traditions is important. But this has nothing to do with the successor issue." "There is no talk of succession at this time," he added.

Kim Yong-nam was interviewed in Pyongyang. He denied reports that Kim Jong-il has appointed his third son Jong-un as his heir apparent, which he described as an "attempt by some foreign media outlets to stifle our rise and prosperity." He added, "Our people are now strongly united under Chairman Kim Jong-il to safeguard the republic and socialism." He added Kim Jong-il is "currently running the entire party, state, and military energetically and wisely."

Kim Yong-nam also called for better relations with Tokyo. "We respect the Pyongyang Declaration" signed between the two sides on normalization of diplomatic relations, which includes a Japanese promise to supply the North with economic assistance, including humanitarian aid and soft loans. "We must seriously overcome the unfortunate past based on this declaration."

He added, "We oppose the Japanese government's wrongful hostile policies, but the Japanese people are not our enemy. The prospect of (North) Korea-Japan relations will solely depend on the attitude of the Japanese government."

That is being read as an offer of dialogue to improve ties after the election of a new government in Japan. In August last year, during the Yasuo Fukuda's premiership, Pyongyang and Japan agreed to reopen investigations of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea in the 1970s and 80s. But contacts stopped with the inauguration of the Taro Aso government in September last year.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

KIM JONG-IL ASSERTS CONTROL  
(Chosun Ilbo, September 11, 2009, Page 5)

By Reporter Ahn Yong-hyun

Why did North Korea's no. 2 Kim Yong-nam publicly announce that finding a successor to leader Kim Jong-il was "not being discussed

at this point"? Given Kim Jong-il's absolute rule, the comments must be viewed as coming straight from the "dear leader" himself. In other words, there is a strong chance that Kim Jong-il personally took steps to quell rumors about the succession.

"Kim Yong-nam's comments are probably related to the fact that there has recently been no more talk of Kim's third son Jong-un being chosen as a successor, following a steady flow of intelligence information showing the leader's health had recovered," one South Korean intelligence official speculated.

Rumors that Jong-un had been appointed as a successor began circulating at the beginning of this year. South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers in June that the North sent out diplomatic notices to a number of countries following its second nuclear test informing them that Jong-un had been chosen as heir apparent.

But early this month, newsletters with the latest information on North Korean reported rumors that that the regime ordered all officials to refrain from talking about the issue of a successor. They said Kim Jong-il is in the pink of health and capable of leading the country for the next 10 years and more.

One North Korea expert said, "Early this year, when Kim Jong-il's recovery seemed uncertain, there was plenty of reason for North Koreans to talk about a successor. But if the health issue has been resolved, discussions over a successor could be seen as a threat."

Experts believe Kim Jong-il knows from experience that the

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appointment of a successor could weaken his absolute power. After being chosen to succeed his father Kim Il-sung in 1980, Kim is believed to have quickly taken over the reins of power.

There have been numerous accounts of Kim having recovered his health. "I've been told that Deputy U.S. Secretary of State James Steinberg, who visited South Korea in June, told our intelligence official that Kim Jong-il would live for at least another five years," one government source said. Steinberg's comment is based on the observations and analyses of medical experts who were shown four hours of footage of Kim moving around.

In mid-August, Kim had dinner with Hyundai Group chairwoman Hyun Jeong-eun for around four hours. One South Korean government official said, "I heard Kim Jong-il drank pink champagne and smoked Marlboro cigarettes. People who have had a stroke must avoid alcohol and cigarettes, but Kim seems to have recovered significantly judging from his drinking and smoking, even in small amounts."

Ryu Dong-ryeol, a researcher at the Police Science Institute said, "Kim Jong-il is sending out a message to the world that he is alive and well and that they should negotiate with him. Under these circumstances, any talk of a successor would not be welcome, and this was voiced through Kim Yong-nam's comments."

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

TOKOLA